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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY

The Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Mercantile Society was held on 17th February at Swiss House, Mr. A. Jaccard, the Chairman, presiding.

The Swiss Embassy was represented by Monsieur M. Feller, Commercial Counsellor, and Monsieur H. Gallusser, First Secretary of Embassy, to whom the Chairman extended a cordial welcome.

Dealing with the accounts for 1964, which had been circulated, Mr. Jaccard stated that the Society could look back on another year of satisfactory and steady progress. Although future prospects appeared to be very good, nevertheless, he foresaw an increase in students' fees in the not too distant future due to the ever increasing running expenses.

In his report on the Society's activities during the past year, the Chairman referred to the great and sad loss suffered through the untimely death of National Councillor A. Meier-Ragg, General Secretary of the SKV and Hon. Member of the London Section. Tribute was paid to his outstanding services rendered to the association and his readiness at all times to give advice and assistance to the Society and its College, whose welfare he had closely at heart.

The monthly members' meetings had generally been well attended and the programme of activities included talks on topical subjects, film shows and social functions.

Despite losses through death and departure from this country, the membership had remained steady, thanks to a compensating influx of new members. At the end of the year, the Society numbered 23 Honorary Members, 223 Active Members, 14 Corresponding Members and 42 Contributing firms and subscribing members.

The report on the College included the customary details of attendance, which again showed an upward trend, 583 students (356 male and 227 female) having been admitted during the year, compared with 573 (341 male and 232 female) in 1963. The average attendance had risen to 239 from 230 in the preceding year, the comparable figures for 1962 and 1961 being 218 and 195 respectively. The peak period was again reached in the summer, when 285 students were in attendance. Applications for the May and June entries had to be made earlier almost year by year and it redounded to the credit of the College that many who had intended to enrol for the summer term were prepared to defer their stay to the autumn, often at no little inconvenience, rather than to go elsewhere. Whilst more students could still be accepted during the winter months, it was gratifying that the younger generation appeared to be far less daunted by the English winter than their elders and that consequently the fluctuations in attendance were gradually being reduced.

The programme of studies followed traditional lines and the teaching methods were constantly under review.

The importance attached to the diploma in business circles in Switzerland could be gauged by the increasing number of candidates who were presenting themselves for the diploma examination, the total for last year being 402 (69% of the total number of students) of whom 386 were successful, the relative figures for 1963 being 348 (60%) and 336 respectively.

The enrolments for evening courses had also increased, totalling 902, as against 861 in 1963 and 825 in 1962. The number of classes held was 48 with an average of 19 students per class.

Satisfactory results were again obtained by both day and evening class students at the examinations of Cambridge University, held in June and December. Out of a total of 48 candidates, 25 were awarded the coveted Certificate of Proficiency in English, whilst of 198 candidates, 143 had been successful in the examination for the Lower Certificate in English. These results were again well above the average of passes obtained by other educational establishments in this country.

The College now employed a full-time staff of 15 teachers, to whom, as well as the administrative staff, the Chairman expressed thanks for their devoted services.

In the field of sports, the College football team were enjoying a very successful run. Having at last been fortunate enough to rent a suitable ground at Putney Vale, the team had been able to enter competitions not open to them previously and at the beginning of the season had joined the South West District Football League, in which they were in a leading position.

The chief credit for these achievements was due to Mr. R. Bachmann, a member of the Society and former student of the College, thanks to whose enthusiasm this sport flourished at the College as never before.

Among notable visitors to the College last year were:—

Dr. H. J. Halbheer, Director of the Secretariat of the Organisation for Swiss Abroad;

The Worshipful the Mayor of St. Pancras, Councillor Mrs. Hilda Chandler, J.P., who was received by H.E. the Swiss Ambassador, Monsieur Beat de Fischer, accompanied by Madame de Fischer;

and Mr. Stephan Baumgartner, Head of the Employment Service of the SKV.

Thanks to the advisory service provided by the SMS in London, 50 applicants were able to obtain commercial employment in this country in 1964, for which the necessary Ministry of Labour permits had been granted, compared with 43 and 40 in 1963 and 1962 respectively.

The activities of the House Committee were outlined in the report presented by its Chairman, Mr. L. W. Krucker. He stated that with every available space from the basement to the top floor fully utilised at Swiss House, the Committee had been mainly concerned with the upkeep of the premises and modernisation of classroom furniture, etc. Apart from the canteen, which continued to provide luncheons and teas for the students and light meals and refreshments prior to the monthly members' meetings, Swiss House continued to provide accommodation in the evenings to various other Swiss Societies for their meetings and again served as a centre for the external examinations of Cambridge University.

In conclusion, Mr. Jaccard expressed thanks to the Swiss Ambassador, Monsieur de Fischer, who had been elected Hon. President of the Society in November, for his keen interest in the activities of the Society and the College ever since his arrival in this country early last year, adding a word of appreciation to the Ambassador's collaborators for their continued support.

He also gratefully acknowledged the help and advice received from the Central Secretariat in Zurich and the annual subsidy obtained from BIGA in Berne, whose understanding of the special position of the SMS College among educational establishments was greatly valued.

Under the temporary Chairmanship of Mr. A. C. Stahelin, Hon. Member of the Central Society and the London Section, the meeting then proceeded with the elections. Mr. Stahelin expressed thanks to Mr. Jaccard for his yeoman services to the Society in his dual capacity of President of the Society and Chairman of the Education Committee during the past 12 months, in which he was prepared to carry on for another year pending the election of a successor on the Education Committee in 1966. This had been found in the person of Mr. J. F. Carlen who had been nominated for the office of Vice-Chairman of the Education Committee. Mr. F. Burri, who had previously held that office and Mr. Carlen were proposed as additional members of the Council and there being no further nominations, Mr. Stahelin declared the Council and the Committees for the financial year 1965 duly elected and constituted as follows:—

Council: Chairman: Mr. A. Jaccard; Trustees: Messrs. J. J. Boos, H. Knoll, L. W. Krucker, F. G. Sommer; Members: Messrs. J. W. Bonjour, F. Burri, J. F. Carlen, R. Chappuis, O. Grob, E. M. Huber, J. E. Schneider, R. Senn, F. Streit. General Purposes Committee: President: Mr. A. Jaccard; Vice-President: Mr. L. W. Krucker; Hon. Secretary: Mr. J. E. Schneider; Hon. Treasurer: Mr. R. Senn; Members: Messrs. H. Andrea, R. Bachmann, E. Zwicky. Education Committee: Chairman: Mr. A. Jaccard; Vice-Chairman: Mr. J. F. Carlen; Members: Messrs. J. W. Bonjour, F. Burri, H. Gruninger, G. Hediger, O. Luterbacher, M. Schneebeli. House Committee: Chairman: Mr. L. W. Krucker; Members: Mrs. M. Meier, Mr. W. Schedler; Press Reporter: Mr. W. Burren. Delegate to the N.S.H.: Mrs. M. Meier. W.B.

PERSONAL

One of our old and faithful readers, Mrs. J. Pfaendler, 61 Woodland Rise, Muswell Hill, London N.10, would be most grateful for any information (in English) regarding special Swiss Christmas customs. She has undertaken to give a talk on the different customs in the various parts of Switzerland, during an international year organised by the Federation of Townswomen's Guilds. She hopes that readers of the "Swiss Observer" may be able to remember Christmas as spent at home.

* * *

It is with deep regret that we have just heard of the death some time ago of two of our readers, Mr. F. Richter, C.B.E., of 2 Temple Chambers, E.C.4, and of Mr. Carl Fischer, 10 Beechfield Avenue, Birstall near Leicester. We extend our sympathy to their families in their bereavement.

* * *

We have just heard of the death of Mr. Max Lichtensteiger. An obituary will appear in the next issue of the "Swiss Observer".

OUR NEXT ISSUE

The "Swiss Observer" is published every second and fourth Friday of the month. Our next issue will appear on 26th March. We shall be glad to receive reports and articles not later than Wednesday, 17th March. Short news items only can be accepted later.

THE CITY SWISS CLUB'S NEW VENTURE

The City Swiss Club is one of the few societies which have a special Press Reporter. Whilst the Club generously extends hospitality to the Editor of the "Swiss Observer" at functions where ladies are admitted, their Press Reporter, our well-known friend Fred Stauffer ("ST.") nevertheless writes the report, and the Editor may sit back and enjoy her dinner without having to "earn" it. But this time for a change, it is her privilege to write a report on a City Swiss Club party, as the Press Reporter was not able to attend.

It concerns an entirely new venture: BOWLING. It was announced as a FAMILY BOWLING EVENING for Tuesday, 23rd February, and it took place at the Ambassador Bowl in Hounslow. And indeed, it was a family affair. To the Editor's great surprise, the husbands had brought along their wives — some fathers and mothers their sons and daughters, and, apart from children, all ages were fairly and squarely represented — a happy party of about fifty, including Monsieur and Madame Heimo of the Swiss Embassy.

The City Swiss Club have shown for a long time that they are very Swiss. They not only foster Anglo-Swiss relationship by having distinguished speakers at some of their meetings and prominent guests at their Annual Banquet in November, they also go in for regular meetings devoted to one of the Swiss national sports: "Jass". Now with their new experiment they have taken on a further Swiss sport: bowling. Their Swiss-ness also shows itself in the fact that the City Swiss Club have no lady members, and that monthly meetings, including the traditional Christmas Dinner, are exclusively for men. In this they have broken with tradition, for ladies were *very* welcome at Hounslow, and a number of them actively and successfully took part in the game. Of course, ten-pin bowling in the American fashion, on highly polished pitches with fully automatic pin handling and counting (at Hounslow there are thirty-two individual lanes of which the Club had booked five for the evening) in an ultra-modern, brilliantly lit hall is far removed from the homely skittle alley of the Swiss village. But it is the same game, and it was soon evident, especially with some of the veterans, that they had been expert skittle players long before ten-pin bowling became fashionable with modern youth.

If the go-ahead Committee of the City Swiss Club decide to tackle yet another of the Swiss national pastimes, we may soon be able to take part in, say, gymnastics or ski-ing. If these, too, like bowling, are somewhat larger-than-life, we might find ourselves doing acrobatics or ski-jumping on Hampstead Heath!

The Committee are to be congratulated on taking the initiative in providing novel entertainment for their members. All those present, the writer has no doubt, thoroughly enjoyed themselves, though she hopes that the other type of family evening will not be neglected, when old and faithful members (plus families) who have no inclination for skittle-alley diversion can meet for a meal, some quiet entertainment and a chat with friends — the one thing which was a little difficult in the hurly-burly of the bowling alley.

Mariann.